

3.9.1 The Characters in Timaeus

In Timaeus, Plato writes that Intellect perceives Ideas existing in the Absolute Living Being, and that the Demiurge planned for the sensible world to possess each of these Ideas (see Plato's Timaeus, 39e). Does this imply that the Ideas come into Being before Divine Intellect? Are we to take this to mean that Divine Intellect Contemplates the Ideas which already Exist? This question rests on the identity of the Absolute Living creature. Is it Divine Intellect itself, or something different?

Some might argue that Plato's passage implies that Intellect is the Experiencer of the Absolute Living Creature. They will say that this implies that the Absolute Living Creature is Intelligible (i.e. comprehensible to Intellect), not Intellect itself. Should we conclude then that the things which Intellect Contemplates are external to it? This would mean that Intellect only ever experiences representations (i.e. images) of the Ideas, and never possesses the Real Ideas themselves. After all, Plato teaches that the Real Beings Exist in Divinity above, in the realm of self-contained Essences.

This conclusion is unnecessary. Even though we can differentiate between the subject and object of Intellect, they are Unified. They are separable in thought only, as they share the same Essence. When Plato writes that Intellect experiences the Ideas, he means that Intellect Contemplates the Ideas it already possesses inside of itself. The objects of Intellect (i.e. the Ideas) are Intellect at rest. The Intellective act (i.e. Contemplation) is this same Essence in Actualization. Intellect is thus both subject and object of Contemplation. It is both Intelligible (i.e. comprehensible to intellect) and Intellective (i.e. capable of Intellectual Acts). Put another way Intellect thinks about itself. Intellect is thus the Demiurge which planned to generate all of the Real Beings into sensible world.

Plato is being cryptic, presenting the Intellective and the Intelligible as two. Others include the Soul of All in their interpretation of this character of Plato's. Perhaps we should allow for different interpretations depending on the overall point being made at the time. If the Soul of All is a third character, then we might say that Intellect Divides the Beings, and Soul generates them through the process of Discursive thinking (which has its seat in Soul, not intellect). In this sense, Soul and Intellect are both dividers. Intellect would be said to divide things into distinct Essences. Soul divides these Essences by generating them one at a time (i.e. discursively).

3.9.2 Directing Oneself to Intellect is to Live Spiritually

The division of a branch of scientific inquiry into individual propositions does not imply that this area of study is fragmented or divided. In fact each proposition implies the entirety of the rest of the subject. Since a particular proposition is contained within the Principle for an area of study, it follows that the Principle is present within each of the individual propositions. Each proposition's place defines and is defined by the place of each other proposition. We should adopt this strategy ourselves, such that we direct each of our faculties in support of the best part of ourselves (i.e. our Intellect). This is what it means to live spiritually. This is what it means to dwell in the supreme above. After all, we reach Divine Intellect via the best part of ourselves (i.e. our particular Intellect).

3.9.3 A Particular Soul is at the Crossroads of Being and Non-Being

Universal Soul did not come into Being, or come to reside in some place. Soul is never anywhere. Rather, everything with a place and time takes part in Soul. This is why Plato never writes that Soul enters into a body. Rather, a body is located within Soul. If we are to locate the source of particular Souls, we could only answer that they come from Universal Soul. Particular Souls also have a location to which they

descend, in which they pass from one body into another. Particular Souls can also leave, and re-ascend. Yet Universal Soul resides above in Divinity and remains fixed there due to its Nature.

Everything in the sensible world participates in Soul, just as every object which is illuminated by the sun receives its rays. Thus, a Particular Soul is illuminated when it looks to what is above itself. There it encounters Real Being. When a particular Soul looks beneath itself, all it can see is Non-Being. When directed at itself, a Particular Soul seeks to create the objects of its desires. So, it fashions them from itself. Yet all that is produced is an Unreal image of what Soul really desires (i.e. Real Being or Essence). In doing so, Soul enters into the void of Indefiniteness. It only will find darkness as it stands in contrast with the Real Being of Intellect. A Particular Soul stands at the crossroads between the Definite Real Being and the Indefinite Non-Being. If it succumbs to the flaws of its Nature, a Particular Soul throws itself deeper into its descent with confidence and joy.

3.9.4 The Source of Multiplicity

How does Multiplicity derive from the Unity of The One? It is via the Omnipresence of The One. Because there is no place where it is absent, it occupies all places at Once. Now, since The One is the Unity of All things, All participates in it. Thus, The One must Exist First so that all other things can participate in it. Since All things derive from The One, and since All things are distinct from The One, Multiplicity arises to distinguish that which is somewhere (i.e. particular things) from that which is everywhere and nowhere (i.e. The One).

Yet here is the real distinction. The One is antecedent to place. Thus, it is itself in no place. It is distinct from each particular thing for this reason. If it were itself everywhere, then there would only be One indistinct Everything. The One is also nowhere. If it were not, it could not be antecedent to all things. In this way, The One is present everywhere, while no where in of itself.

3.9.5 Soul is to Intellect as Vision is to a Sensible Object

Soul experiences Intellect in the same way that sight experiences a visible object. Intellect contains the objects which the Soul experiences. Yet before Soul can experience an Idea, that aspect of its potential experience remains indefinite. This indefinite potential in Soul serves as the Matter which receives Form from the ideas of Intellect.

3.9.6 Our Intellect is Intellective

When we Contemplate ourselves Intellectually, we are observing a Being with an Intellective (i.e. capable of acts of intellect) Nature. If we were not Intellective, then we would be unable to have this Intellectual experience. We know this about ourselves directly. Thus, we have a direct, intuitive experience what it means to Contemplate something. Because an Intellective nature engages in acts of Intellect based on the objects of Intellect, the fact that we are Intellective proves that there are objects of Intellect which are antecedent to our Intellective abilities. If there were no objects of Intellect before our Intellective acts, what would we Contemplate? There is an Intellectual Life which precedes our Intellective Acts. Those who Actualize their Intellects and focus on themselves will realize that we are derived from an Intellectual Principle, and in Contemplating the Intellectual Principles we generate mere images of them for our own experience.

3.9.7 Motion, Rest, Intellect, and The One

The One, First in rank, is the source from which Movement and Rest derive. Thus, it is antecedent to them. Intellect (Nous), Second in rank, is in Motion and Rest relative to The One. Intellect is itself Unified (and thus at Rest), but it also directs its thoughts towards the One (and is thus in Motion). The One itself

is not Intellective. Intellect is Two, the thinker with its thoughts directed to something else. Thus, it is deficient relative to The One. Intellect experiences the Good directly, but is not the Good itself. The One is Good in of itself.

3.9.8 Actualization and Existence

Things which engage in Acts (i.e. pass from Potential to Actual) remain in Existence for the duration of said Act. Bodies (e.g. Fire), thus can experience completion for the duration of their Act only. Because Bodied are mixed with Matter, they degrade and their Existence is temporary. All things which Act but do not mingle with Matter (i.e. Real Beings) Exist Eternally. Yet even they exist in terms of potential with respect to an antecedent principle (i.e. The One).

3.9.9 The One Does Not Think

The First (i.e. The One), transcendent to Being, does not think. Intellect is the Real Beings and their Motion or Rest within the Intellectual sphere. The First relates to nothing, though all things relate to it. Thus, all things are at Rest in the presence of The One, yet in Motion as they strive towards it. All Motion is striving, and since the One lacks nothing, it strives for Nothing. What would it aspire to?

The One does not Contemplate itself. Those who propose this can only be right if they mean that The One is in possession of itself. Yet possession and thought are not really the same. Thought is the first Actualization. So, there can be no Actualization before Intellect. Put another way, the source of Intellect must transcend it and not participate in. Thought is not primary, and not all thoughts are even admirable. Only thoughts directed towards The Good are to be venerated. Thus, Intellect is subsequent to The One.

Is The One conscious of itself? What would it be consciously aware of? It is not conscious of its Goodness, as it is antecedent to conscious thought. It is Good before any conscious thoughts, and so its Goodness is in no way contingent on any thought or awareness. If The One were contingent on any thought for its Goodness, there would be no Goodness for it to be conscious of, and it would thus not Exist.

Is The One alive? Our answer is that it is not alive, but rather it is the source of life. That which is Intellective is secondary to the One. Any Intellective act seeks to gain knowledge, which implies a lack of said knowledge. Thus, for the One to think of itself, it would need to be ignorant of itself. It would be imperfect, only brought to perfection by its thoughts. Thus, we cannot ascribe thought to The One. To do so would be to impart it with deficiency and contingency.